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## Viewing cable 09NICOSIA58, CYPRUS WASHING HANDS OF M/V MONCHEGORSK?

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09NICOSIA58**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
<a href="#">09NICOSIA58</a>	<a href="#">2009-01-27 12:43</a>	<a href="#">2011-08-30 01:44</a>	<a href="#">SECRET</a>	<a href="#">Embassy Nicosia</a>

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.tanea.gr>

VZCZCXRO5898  
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV  
DE RUEHNC #0058/01 0271243  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 271243Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9547  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 2126  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 0281  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 1332  
RHEFNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000058

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR, NEA, ISN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2018  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [MNUC](#) [IR](#) [SY](#) [CY](#)

SUBJECT: CYPRUS WASHING HANDS OF M/V MONCHEGORSK?

REF: A. STATE 5968

1B. EUR/SE-EMBASSY O-I OF JANUARY 26

Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (S) SUMMARY: It is becoming evident that the Republic of Cyprus, likely fearing Cyprus Problem-related "reprisals" from Damascus, hopes to avoid having to interdict and/or divert to an RoC port the M/V Monchegorsk, a Cypriot-flagged, Russian-owned ocean freighter carrying arms from Iran to Syria in contravention of UN Security Council Resolutions 1747 and 1803 (Ref A). Presidential Diplomatic Coordinator Leonidas Pantelides informed the Ambassador at 1215 hrs local (0515 DC) on January 27 that Cyprus had requested the ship's owner to radio the master to divert to Limassol, but as yet had received no response. "This is all that we can do," Pantelides insisted. At its present speed and direction, the Monchegorsk will reach Syria by 2330 Zulu January 27. END SUMMARY.

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Current Status of Vessel, Shipping Company:  
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12. (S) U.S. Navy sources told the Embassy that the Monchegorsk, at its current heading and 11-knot speed, should reach Latakeia, Syria, its final destination, by 2330 hrs Zulu January 27. NSA contacts report the ship has not received or transmitted radio messages recently (NFI). Embassy interlocutors at the Cyprus Shipping Chamber report that NB Shipping Limited, a Limassol company still listed as the registered owner of the Monchegorsk, recently came close to losing its right to fly the Cyprus flag for unrelated non-compliance with national maritime standards.

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High-level Local Diplomatic Activity:  
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13. (S) In last 24 hours, the Embassy has engaged chief Palace diplomat Pantelides (three times), Presidential Commissioner/chief Cyprus Problem negotiator George Iacovou, and MFA Permanent Secretary (D-equivalent) Nicolas Emiliou, drawing liberally on the legal arguments provided in Ref B (these calls were in addition to the direct demarche the Ambassador had made to RoC President Demetris Christofias on January 23). Pantelides at 1100 hrs on January 27 confirmed that a recall of the Monchegorsk to Limassol had been issued, but no response had yet been received. Under the Cypriot standard operating procedure, the Merchant Shipping Department had notified the owners, who were ultimately responsible for making the ship pull into port -- there was no direct RoC contact with the ship (an Embassy contact in the shipping industry later confirmed the SOP). The Ambassador emphasized the obligations of Cyprus as the flag state to take action, and noted Washington's highest-possible-level interest. Pantelides seemingly hoped to keep the Monchegorsk out of United Nations Security Council discussions, and queried whether the Monchegorsk issue was already under consideration in New York.

14. (S) In a 1215 hrs follow-up telcon, Pantelides referred back to Ref B points and stated his government had "done what it needed to do" in alerting the Monchegorsk's owner; he subsequently faxed us text from the RoC instruction (below). The Ambassador asked whether Cyprus could use the assistance of the United States in contacting the ship directly to make Cyprus's instructions known to the captain, or otherwise provide additional help. Pantelides deflected both questions, making clear the RoC did not want the U.S. involved. "The Monchegorsk is already half-way there," he ended, somewhat cryptically.

15. (S) Text of the RoC message follows. The fax was not on letterhead, lacked sender and receiver names, titles, and addresses, and featured visible cut-and-paste marks. It was

obviously just a short excerpt from the notification letter.

"Dear Captain Smirnov

The reason that we ask you to direct the ship to Limassol is to ensure that its cargo is in conformity with UN Security Council Resolutions 1747 (2007) and 1803 (2008).

Any cargo which is not in conformity has to be unloaded at Limassol in order to avoid infringement of the above Resolutions and violation of the Cyprus Ships (Prohibition of Transportation) Laws 1966-1971 (Law 26/66 as amended).

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Why the Cold Feet?  
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16. (C) COMMENT: Greek Cypriots learn Security Council resolutions like others learn their ABCs -- early and by heart. No country pays more lip service to their status at the top of the international pyramid. Why, then, the seeming disregard for RoC obligations under 1747 and 1803? Contacts ranging from President Christofias to worker bees at the MFA informed us that Cyprus's 2006 decision to interdict the M/V Gregorio, a vessel carrying missile radar equipment from North Korea to Syria, had caused grave damage to its bilateral relations with Damascus. The Syrians had responded by green-lighting regular ferry service between Latakeia and the "occupied" port of Famagusta in the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus." Highest-level RoC entreaties have failed to compel Damascus to end the sea link, one of the few clear diplomatic blows the Cypriots have taken recently. They worry that further government action against the Monchegorsk might provoke Damascus to take further steps to "upgrade" the "TRNC."  
Urbancic